

On April 12, 2005, the University of Washington Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) President's Assistant II (PAII) met with six graduate students in the Asian Languages program from 12:00PM to 1:30PM. All students in the program were invited to the meeting with the PAII. The purpose of this meeting was to help the GPSS evaluate the strengths and weakness of that graduate program from the perspective of its graduate students. The students that attended the meeting with the PAII came from all levels of study in the Asian Languages graduate program, although all in attendance had not yet commenced writing their dissertation. In addition, the PAII observed a meeting with the graduate students in program and the University of Washington Graduate School's visiting team. The aim of this report is to represent the views of graduate students in that program to the Graduate Council of the University of Washington's Graduate School, which is currently conducting a ten-year review of the Asian Languages graduate program.

## PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Overall graduate students in the Asian Languages program seemed very content with most of the facets of their graduate experience. They highlighted several positive features of the program:

- Students are learning the requisite skills for their professional careers, especially for those interested in an academic path;
- Good teacher-student ratio and good communications between professors and students, including electronic and face-to-face access;
- Good departmental relations, including informal get-togethers with students and instructors, as well as formal departmental events (e.g., quarterly and annual colloquia);
- Plenty of opportunities for students to work as Teaching Assistants (T.A.), providing students with a source of funding, so long as student is competent in an Asian Language;
- Given the abundant T.A. positions, students feel comfortable about the amount and transparency of allocated graduate funding;
- Program's professors are open to students taking any course the student believes is necessary;

## PROGAM WEAKNESSES

The students participating in a review had very few complaints about their program, although they remarked on a few problems:

- Students do not have opportunities to assist or instruct courses other than language classes. For example, students would like to T.A. or instruct classes on the culture and countries relevant to their studies;
- One student working in a rare language worried about having anyone to work with in the future as professors retire and are not replaced both inside and outside of the department;

## CONCLUSION

On several levels, graduate life in the Asian Languages program seems very healthy. The only note of skepticism that must be sounded is that only six graduates, out of some fifty total, participated in the review. (This rate of participation, however, is well within the norm observed by the GPSS.) Given the positive feeling projected by the students, it is difficult to make any substantive recommendation to the program. The Asian Languages program should be commended for its obvious commitment to graduate students and their development.

(This report was prepared by Jacob Mundy, GPSS Presidential Assistant II.)